

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

RI Trails Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2010

Bill McCormick RI Trials Club

Donn DiBiasio RI State Rifle & Revolver Association

Cindy Julien Gun Owners PAC

Sylvia Hayden RI Federation of Riding Clubs

Chet Hayden RI Federation of Riding Clubs

Denise Poyer Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Sue Barker RI Greenways Alliance

Gregg J. Cassidy RI DEM, Planning & Development

Jack Lancelotta Jaycee Foundation

Peter Gengler Int. Mountain Biking Association

Alvan Moder NE Mountain Biking Association

Will Riverso RI Water Resources Board

Henry Cruciani Appalacian Mountain Club

Roy Najecki RI Land Trust Council

Robert Butler Northeast Association of 4 x 4 Clubs

Meg Kerr RI Blueways Alliance

Martha Cruciani Barton Farm

Larry Mouradjian DEM

Catherine Sparks RIDEM Forestry

Anthony Ferranti ACI Customs

Steve Church RIDOT

Lisa Primiano RI DEM, Planning & Development

Barbara Kilcup Yankee Trailers

Jay B. Aron RIDEM Forestry

Lisa Primiano RI DEM Planning & Development

Kevin Nelson Statewide Planning

Meeting called to order at 3:30 PM.

1. Introductions

2. Review of Meeting Minutes

- **Motion to accept meeting minutes of August 17, 2010. Motion to approve Sue Barker, seconded by Chet Hayden. . Approved.**

3. Small Grant Requests

o Barton Farm, Warwick. Martha Cruciani requested an extension of a trail improvement grant for Barton Farm on Centerville Road. This grant involves invasive plants (Multi-flora Rose) that encroach on

trails along the edge of old farm fields. The grant was approved in 2006 but nothing was ever done. There is an opportunity in the upcoming week through Warwick Community Action to use City Corps crews to assist. The major grant expense would be to rent equipment and an operator.

Meg Kerr pointed out the grant request did not follow the normal procedure requesting an extension since there wasn't a written request.

Larry Mouradjian noted that without a detailed written request the Committee cannot evaluate the nature of the project since some members do not know what was approved in 2006.

Kevin Nelson stated that since the item was not on the agenda before the meeting the Committee cannot vote on it.

Henry Cruciani asked if there was a procedure to approve the grant in an emergency meeting.

Kevin Nelson noted that even with special meetings there has to be 48 hours notice to comply with the open meetings law and this project is scheduled to take place in four days.

Bob Butler clarified that grantees can't apply for a grant for a project that has already been done so they couldn't complete it this weekend

and do the paperwork after the fact.

The grant request was denied since it wasn't received early enough to be on the agenda in compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

o Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association.

This request was approved at the last meeting but there was a discrepancy in the amount requested on the application and that approved in the meeting minutes. Denise Poyer clarified that \$2850.00 was requested (and approved). Larry Mouradjian and Cathy Sparks expressed DEM's support for the project.

o NE Area Four Wheel Drive Club. Bob Butler deferred this request but asked if the Trail Advisory Committee could develop a brochure for them to distribute at events.

o Greenways Alliance Newsletter. Sue Barker distributed copies of the winter edition which highlighted four of the large grants awarded by the Trail Advisory Committee earlier this year. The grant request was for \$8000.00 to publish and distribute four editions highlighting recreational trails in Rhode Island. She added she would like to get information from Off Road Vehicles Clubs and feature that trail use in a future issue.

Barbara Kilcup made a motion to approve up to \$8000.00 to publish four editions of the newsletter. Seconded by Roy Najecki. Approved.

Meg Kerr mentioned that since the Newsletter is the most visible manifestation of the Recreational Trail Program acknowledgment should be a condition of the grant. Sue Barker pointed out that the source of grant funding is listed on page three of the current issue and this would continue in the future.

o Tiverton Open Space Commission. Grant request \$3000.00 to replace a bridge over Sin and Flesh Brook that was damaged in floods last spring.

Meg Kerr stated she didn't understand the budget and since the grant can't be used to pay for volunteer labor "the math didn't work".

Nevin Nelson made it clear that the grantee cannot be reimbursed for non legitimate costs and they must document expenses for reimbursement.

Motion to approve the grant request for a replacement bridge over Sin & Flesh Brook made by Sylvia Hayden, seconded by Denise Poyer. Approved.

o Blackstone Park Conservancy \$2350.32 for fencing to restrict access to a overused trail that is eroding.

Roy Najecki noted that a similar request was approved at a recent meeting and questioned whether grantees are allowed to do a larger projects in pieces to qualify for grant funding?

Jay Aron felt there was a loophole in the grant guidelines that allows small grants to be used if a larger grant is not available.

Sylvia Hayden said it was the policy of the Trails Advisory Committee in the past not to approve a second grant for an applicant until a previous grant is completed.

Sue Barker made a motion to approve the grant request for \$2350.32 to buy materials to stop use of the damaged trail. Seconded by Roy Najecki. Approved.

o Ballard Park, Newport. Trail Improvement Grant. A complete application was not received. This grant request was deferred.

4. Status of Current Grants

Steve Church distributed spreadsheets that summarized all of the grant awards for large Trail Improvement , Materials Only, educational, and DEM equipment grants.

5. Revision of Regulations

The regulations governing the Trails Advisory Committee and the Distribution of trail grants were developed in 1999. A subcommittee was formed at the last meeting to investigate revising the regulations to reflect current conditions. The subcommittee consists of Kevin Nelson, Denise Poyer, Roy Najecki, Steve Church, Gregg Cassidy, and Lisa Primiano. The Committee met November 8th, reviewed the regulations line by line and discussed changes. The proposed revisions will be drafted by the subcommittee and reviewed by DEM/Legal before a final draft is circulated among the entire Trails Advisory Committee.

Denise Poyer questioned the tasks and time involved in the process.

Lisa Primiano replied that the process involves a public notice and public hearing and could take four to five months.

6. Other Business

Tony Ferranti introduced himself as an off road vehicle enthusiast who is interested on Trail Advisory Committee issues related to off road vehicle issues. Specifically How is the Committee involved with ORV issues? Is land available for motorized use? Is there an advocacy group promoting ORV use of trails?

Kevin Nelson explained that a subcommittee was formed several years ago to investigate acquiring a site to serve the needs of the ORV community. Zoning proved to be the major obstacle .

Henry Cruciani added that despite a statewide search a suitable location could not be found.

Tony Ferranti stated he has started a grass root effort to identify a suitable location but that public property and conservation lands have easements that restrict their use.

Roy Najecki mentioned that if land were identified and a town council OK'd use for a ORV facility it may not be permitted to charge admission if federal funds were used.

Steve Church clarified that the Recreational Trail Program has issued guidance on that issue and the Federal Regulations would have to be consulted.

Larry Mouradjian stated that any revenue generated would have to be used to pay back the acquisition costs. There is also the issue created by liability if a user fee is charged as well as the burden the operation would place on municipal services.

Peter Gengler mentioned that in Massachusetts Freetown Forest, Wrentham State Forest , and October Mountain State Forest are open

to ORV use.

Tony Ferranti added there is a huge demand for motorized recreation this can be demonstrated by the amount of interest in organized event like the Grass Drags in New Hampshire that attracts people from all over the region every fall.

Motion to adjourn by Sue Barker, seconded by Barbara Kilcup.

Meeting adjourned 4:40.

Next meeting February 15, 2011.